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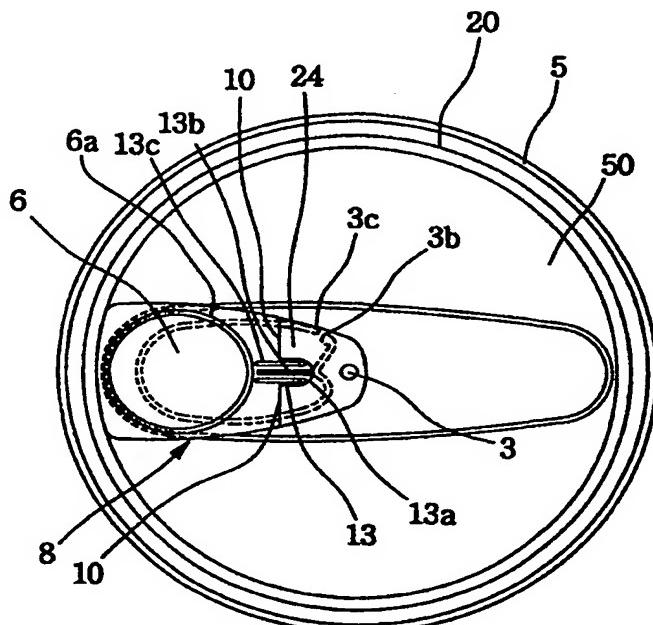
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(71)(72) Applicant and Inventor: CHO, Sung, Ho [KR/KR]; 312-2301, Kummaeul Apt., 933-7, Pyongchon-dong, Dongan-ku, Anyang-shi, Kyongki-do 431-070 (KR).		Published With international search report.	
(74) Agent: HONG, Sung, Chul; New Seoul Building, 7th Floor, 828-8, Yeoksam-dong, Kangnam-ku, Seoul 135-080 (KR).			

(54) Title: TOP LID FOR BEVERAGE CANS WITH OPENER INTEGRATED SANITARY COVER

(57) Abstract

A top lid for beverage cans (1) with an opener integrated sanitary cover (8) is disclosed. The sanitary cover (8) is designed to cover the area around the opening piece (3a) defined on the top lid by a depressed seam (3c), thus protecting the lip contact portion of the top lid from atmospheric impurities and keeping the can sanitary during storage of the can. The sanitary cover (8) also has a reinforced opener part (13) which presses down the opening piece (3a) and breaks the piece along the depressed seam (3c) when the cover is levered up. The opener part has a reinforcing rib (13b) improving the stiffness of the opener part (13) and so the opener part (13) reliably breaks the opening piece without failure even though a high pressure acts on the interior surface of the opening piece. The configuration and arrangement of the reinforcing



means for the opener part may be freely changed in accordance with the designing conditions of the can, or the interior pressure acting on the opening piece and the size of the can. The sanitary cover (8) also has a thumb-operable resilient dome (6) used for elastically raising up the cover when the dome is pressed down by a thumb. Due to the dome, it is easy for a user to grasp and handle the cover (8) while levering up the cover (8) to open the top lid of the can (1).

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TOP LID FOR BEVERAGE CANS WITH OPENER INTEGRATED SANITARY COVER

Technical Field

The present invention relates, in general, to beverage cans made of metal, such as aluminum or steel, and, more particularly, to a top lid for such beverage cans with an opener integrated sanitary cover, the sanitary cover being attached to the top lid using a locking member and being designed to sanitarily cover the lip contact portion of the top lid using its cover part during storage of the can and to reliably open the top lid without failure using its reinforced opener part.

Background Art

In order to open and empty a beverage can made of metal, a lever opener, exteriorly attached to the top lid of the can using a locking member, such as a rivet, is levered up, thus breaking an opening piece of the lid along a depressed seam and forming a rounded opening on said lid. Such beverage cans are stored with the top lids being exposed to the atmosphere, and so the lip contact portion defined around the opening piece is regrettably contaminated by dust and other atmospheric impurities. During use of such a can, the lip contact portion, contaminated with such impurities, is bad for one's health. In an effort to overcome the above problem, a can, with a sanitary suction straw being provided at the can, was proposed. However, the can, with such a suction straw, is problematic in that it is very difficult to produce the can in great quantity, and so the can fails to be produced on a commercial scale.

In order to solve the problems experienced in the typical beverage cans, the inventor of this invention proposed a beverage can with a sanitary cover as disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,813,559, corresponding to Korean Patent Registration No. 141,618. This can may be designed to have three types. That is, the can may have

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both a sanitary cover means and a lever opener, which are commonly and rotatably attached to the top lid of a can using one rivet, thus sanitarily covering the lip contact portion of the lid and being used for opening the lid,
5 respectively. Alternatively, the sanitary cover may be cast with the lever opener into a single structure while being rotatably attached to the top lid by a rivet. This sanitary cover is thus rotatable between two positions, or a sanitarily covering position and a levering position.
10 As a further alternative, the sanitary cover may be cast with the lever opener into a single structure in a manner similar to that of the second type. However, the sanitary cover of the third type is designed to be levered up at its covering position without being rotated
15 to a separate levering position different from the second type. That is, the sanitary cover of the third type has a U-shaped lever opener part at a position around the rivet, thus effectively opening the lid when it is levered up at the covering position.

20 The can, with such a sanitary cover, effectively and almost completely overcomes the sanitary problem experienced in the typical beverage cans. However, it has been noted that the can regrettably has the following problems. That is, in the case of the first-type can, it
25 is necessary to separately produce both the sanitary cover and the lever opener and to attach them on the top lid of a can using one rivet. This results in a problem in that it is very difficult to produce such cans in great quantity, and so the can fails to be produced on a
30 commercial scale. In addition, due to the separate lever opener and the sanitary cover, the manufacturing cost of the can is increased. Another problem of the first-type can resides in that it is inconvenient to a user since the user has to separately manipulate the cover and the
35 opener prior to emptying the can. On the other hand, the second-type can is problematic in that the sanitary cover, integrated with the lever opener, has to be rotated from a covering position to a levering position prior to breaking the opening piece along the depressed seam.
40 This is inconvenient to a user and may allow an incorrect

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operation of the cover while rotating or levering the cover. In the third-type can, the opener integrated sanitary cover is designed to have a lever opener part, which levers down the opening piece of the top lid when 5 the cover is levered up at the covering position to open the lid. However, the lever opener part is free from any reinforcing means, thus having a structural defect failing to effectively break the opening piece along the depressed seam. This allows a user to sometimes fail to open the 10 top lid and results in an inconvenience to the user. In addition, the sanitary cover regardless of the type, disclosed in the above U.S. patent, is designed to almost completely cover the seamed rim until it covers the outside portion of said rim. Due to such a sanitary 15 cover, it is somewhat difficult to produce the can, and so the work efficiency and productivity while producing the can is reduced.

Disclosure of the Invention

Accordingly, the present invention has been made 20 keeping in mind the above problems occurring in the prior art, and an object of the present invention is to provide a top lid for beverage cans with an opener integrated sanitary cover, the cover being primarily designed to be levered up at its covering position while opening the lid 25 using its opener part and having a reinforcing means for improving the stiffness of the opener part, thus reliably opening the lid without failure, the cover also having a thumb-operable resilient dome capable of elastically raising a sanitary cover part of the cover over the lid 30 when the dome is pressed down by a thumb, thus allowing a user to easily handle the cover while levering up the cover, the cover also having a reaction means for allowing the resilient dome to more effectively raise the sanitary cover part when the dome is thumb-pressed, and 35 the cover being further designed to have a structure free from disturbing the process of manufacturing the can, thus allowing the can to be effectively produced in great quantity or on a commercial scale.

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In order to accomplish the above object, the present invention provides a top lid for beverage cans with an opener integrated sanitary cover. The sanitary cover, attached to the top lid using a locking member, is 5 designed to reach a seamed rim of the can or a position just inside the interior wall of the seamed rim of the can, or is designed to cover the area around the opening piece defined on the top lid by a depressed seam. The sanitary cover has a thumb-operable resilient dome on its 10 sanitary cover part, thus being elastically raised up at the sanitary cover part when the dome is pressed down by a thumb. In the present invention, the resilient dome may have a hemispherical profile or another profile, such as an angled profile, modified from the hemispherical 15 profile. In order to allow the dome to more reliably perform an elastic reaction, a reaction means is formed on or around the dome. The reaction means for the resilient dome may comprise a reaction rim formed along the outside edge of the dome, a reaction slit formed on 20 the top portion of the dome, or a reaction nipple formed on the top portion of the dome. An opener part, used for pressing down the opening piece and breaking the piece along the depressed seam when the sanitary cover is levered up, is defined on the sanitary cover by a cutting 25 line at an intermediate position between the locking member and the dome. The sanitary cover also has a reinforcing means for improving stiffness of the opener part, thus allowing the opener part to more effectively break the opening piece along the depressed seam without 30 failure.

In order to open and empty a beverage can with the sanitary cover, the resilient dome is primarily pressed down by a thumb with the sanitary cover being not rotated from the covering position. When the dome is pressed 35 down, the sanitary cover is elastically raised up at its cover part due to a reaction force of the dome, thus being spaced apart from the top lid. Therefore, it is easy for a user to grasp and handle the cover when levering up the cover to press down the opening piece 40 using the opener part. When the cover is levered up as

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described above, the opener part levers down the opening piece, thus breaking the piece along the depressed seam. The above opener part is provided with a reinforcing means, such as a reinforcing rib having a first folded and compact rectangular cross-section, a second reinforcing rib having an arcuate cross-section, or a rugged pattern, thus having an improved stiffness. Therefore, the opener part reliably breaks the opening piece along the depressed seam without failure regardless of an interior pressure acting on the opening piece.

The thumb-operable resilient dome of this invention may be preferably used with a conventional lever opener attached to the top lid. In such a case, the lever opener is elastically raised up when the dome is pressed down by a thumb. Therefore, it is easy for a user to grasp and handle the opener while levering up the opener to open the top lid of the can.

In an embodiment of this invention, a thumb-operable resilient dome is formed on the sanitary cover, while an arcuate cutting line is formed at an intermediate portion of the sanitary cover between the locking member and the dome, thus forming the opener part. In addition, a depressed bending line is formed on the sanitary cover while transversely and linearly extending outwardly from each end of the cutting line to the outside edge of the cover. The sanitary cover is thus bendable along said bending line when the cover is levered up. The above opener part has a reinforcing means, such as a reinforcing rib having a first folded and compact rectangular cross-section, a second reinforcing rib having an arcuate cross-section, or a rugged pattern, thus having an improved stiffness. The opener part thus reliably breaks the opening piece along the depressed seam without failure.

In the present invention, the sanitary cover may be designed to reach the seamed rim of the can. However, it is more preferable to design the sanitary cover to have a compact size reaching a position just inside the interior wall of the seamed rim or covering the area around the opening piece since such a sanitary cover

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allows the beverage cans to be produced in great quantity or on a commercial scale.

The sanitary cover of this invention may be attached to the top lid using two or more locking members. In
5 addition, it is possible to change the length and width of the sanitary cover in accordance with the designing conditions of the can. The thumb-operable resilient dome may be somewhat freely designed if the dome reliably performs an elastic reaction capable of raising the
10 sanitary cover when the dome is pressed down by a thumb. The configuration and arrangement of the reinforcing ribs formed on the opener part may be freely changed in accordance with the designing conditions of the can, or the interior pressure acting on the opening piece and the
15 size of the can.

Brief Description of the Drawings

The above and other objects, features and other advantages of the present invention will be more clearly understood from the following detailed description taken
20 in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figs. 1a to 1e are views of the top lid of a can provided with a sanitary cover in accordance with the primary embodiment of the present invention, in which Figs. 1a to 1c are a perspective view, a plan view, and
25 a sectional view of the lid with the cover closely covering the lip contact portion of the lid by its cover part, and Figs. 1d and 1e are sectional views of the top lid with a thumb-operable resilient dome of the cover being pressed down to elastically raise the cover part;

30 Figs. 1f to 1j are sectional views of top lids provided with sanitary covers in accordance with further embodiments of this invention;

Figs. 2a to 2c are sectional views of top lids, respectively showing embodiments of the thumb-operable
35 resilient dome formed on the sanitary cover of this invention;

Figs. 3a to 3c are sectional views, respectively showing embodiments of the thumb-operable resilient dome

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of this invention;

Figs. 4a to 4d are sectional views, respectively showing additional embodiments of the thumb-operable resilient dome of this invention;

5 Figs. 5a and 5b are sectional views, respectively showing other embodiments of the thumb-operable resilient dome of this invention;

10 Figs. 6a and 6b are a perspective view and a plan view of the top lid of a can provided with a sanitary cover in accordance with still another embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 7 is a perspective view of the top lid of a can provided with a sanitary cover in accordance with still another embodiment of the present invention;

15 Fig. 8 is a plan view of the top lid of a can provided with a sanitary cover in accordance with still another embodiment of the present invention;

20 Fig. 9 is a plan view of the top lid of a can provided with a sanitary cover in accordance with still another embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 10 is a plan view of the top lid of a can provided with a sanitary cover in accordance with still another embodiment of the present invention;

25 Fig. 11 is a plan view of the top lid of a can provided with a sanitary cover in accordance with still another embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 12a to 12c are sectional views, respectively showing embodiments of a reinforced opener part formed at the sanitary cover of this invention;

30 Fig. 13 is a sectional view, showing another embodiment of the reinforced opener part;

Figs. 14a and 14b are a perspective view and a sectional view, showing still another embodiment of the reinforced opener part;

35 Figs. 14c and 14d are sectional views, respectively showing further embodiments of the reinforced opener part;

Fig. 15 is a sectional view, showing still another embodiment of the reinforced opener part;

40 Fig. 16 is a plan view, showing the top lid of a can provided with a sanitary cover in accordance with still

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another embodiment of the present invention; and

Figs. 17a and 17b are views, individually showing a thumb-operable resilient dome of this invention used with a conventional lever opener attached to the top lid.

5 Best Mode for Carrying Out the Invention

Figs. 1a to 1e are views, showing the top lid of a can provided with a sanitary cover in accordance with the primary embodiment of this invention. As shown in the drawings, a sanitary cover 8 is attached to the top lid 50 of a beverage can using a locking member 3 and is adapted for keeping the lip contact portion of the top lid 50 sanitary during storage of the can.

The sanitary cover 8 comprises a thin plate body 8a. The thin plate body 8a, having a sanitary cover part at an outside end portion thereof, is exteriorly attached to the top lid 50 at an inside end portion thereof using the locking member 3 in a way such that the cover 8 completely covers the opening piece 3a, defined on the top lid 50 by a depressed seam 3c. The cover 8 also covers the lip contact portion around the opening piece 3a by its sanitary cover part.

A thumb-operable resilient dome 6 is formed on the sanitary cover part of the thin plate body 8a and is adapted for elastically raising the cover part above the top lid 50 when the dome 6 is pressed down. An opener part 13 is defined on the thin plate body 8a by a U-shaped depressed cutting line 24 at an intermediate position between the locking member 3 and the dome 6. The above opener part 13 thus has a U-shaped profile projecting toward the locking member 3. A depressed bending line 10 is formed on the thin plate body 8a while transversely and linearly extending outwardly from each end of the U-shaped depressed cutting line 24 to the outside edge of the thin plate body 8a. The thin plate body 8a is thus bendable along the two bending lines 10 when the cover 8 is levered up so as to break the opening piece 3a along the depressed seam 3c.

The sanitary cover 8 also has a reinforcing means

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for improving stiffness of the U-shaped opener part 13, thus allowing the opener part 13 to more reliably break the opening piece 3a along the depressed seam 3c without failure. In the primary embodiment, the reinforcing means 5 comprises one center reinforcing rib 13b and two side reinforcing ribs 13c. Of the three reinforcing ribs 13b and 13c, the center rib 13b, having a folded and compact rectangular cross-section, extends along the central axis of the opener part 13 from the outside edge 13a of the 10 part 13 to the edge of the dome 6. On the other hand, the two side ribs 13c, individually having an arcuate cross-section, extend from the outside edge 13a of the part 13 to the edge of the dome 6 at both sides of the center rib 13b. The two side ribs 13c are parallel to 15 the center rib 13b.

The sanitary cover 8 also has a first reaction means for allowing the dome 6 to more effectively perform a desired resilient reaction when the dome 6 is pressed down by a thumb. In the primary embodiment, the first 20 reaction means comprises an annular reaction rim 6a which is formed along the outside edge of the resilient dome 6.

In the present invention, the sanitary cover 8 may be designed to only cover the area around the opening piece 3a as shown in Figs. 1b and 1c. Alternatively, the 25 sanitary cover 8 may be designed to further extend until it reaches a position just inside the interior wall 20 of the seamed rim 5 and rests in the annular groove of the top lid as shown in Fig. 1f. As well known to those skilled in the art, the above rim 20 seams the junction 30 between the top lid 50 and the sidewall of the can. As a further alternative, the sanitary cover 8 may be designed to reach a position just inside the interior wall 20 of the seamed rim 5, with the outside edge of the cover 8 being closely seated in a seating groove formed 35 on the sidewall of the annular groove of the top lid at a position just inside the interior wall 20 as shown in Fig. 1g. In such a case, the outside edge of the cover 8 is inserted into the seating groove of the top lid 50 to a length equal to the thickness of the cover 8. The 40 sanitary cover 8 of Fig. 1g thus gives a compact

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appearance to the top lid 50 and improves work efficiency while producing the can. In another embodiment, the top lid 50 may be designed to be free from any annular groove at a position inside the interior wall 20 of the rim 5 as 5 shown in Fig. 1h. In such a case, the outside edge of the cover 8 forms a space between the edge of the cover 8 and the interior wall 20 of the rim 5. In a further embodiment, the sanitary cover 8 may further extend until it reaches a middle portion of the interior wall 20 of 10 the seamed rim 5 as shown in Fig. 1i. In still another embodiment, the sanitary cover 8 may be designed to reach the middle portion of the interior wall 20 of the seamed rim 5, with the outside edge of the cover 8 being closely seated in a seating groove formed on the interior wall 20 15 as shown in Fig. 1j. In such a case, the outside edge of the cover 8 is inserted into the seating groove of the interior wall 20 to a length equal to the thickness of the cover 8. The sanitary cover 8 of Fig. 1j gives a compact appearance to the top lid 50 and improves work 20 efficiency while producing the can in the same manner as that described for the embodiment of Fig. 1g.

As described above, both the center reinforcing rib 13b and the two side reinforcing ribs 13c, formed on the U-shaped opener part 13, individually extend from the 25 outside edge 13a of the opener part 13 to a position just outside the edge of dome 6. In order to further improve the stiffness of the U-shaped opener part 13, the three reinforcing ribs 13b and 13c may further extend until they completely reach the dome 6. In the primary 30 embodiment, the three reinforcing ribs 13b and 13c are designed to project upwardly. However, it should be understood that the three reinforcing ribs 13b and 13c may be designed to project downwardly without affecting the functioning of the reinforcing ribs. When two or 35 more reinforcing ribs are formed on the U-shaped opener part 13 as disclosed in the primary embodiment, some of the reinforcing ribs may be designed to project upwardly with the other ribs projecting downwardly. In such a case, it is more preferable to design the reinforcing 40 ribs to alternately project upwardly and downwardly.

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In the primary embodiment, the center rib 13b is formed by primarily projecting the U-shaped opener part 13 upwardly along the central axis of the part 13, thus giving an arcuate cross-section to the rib 13b.

5 Thereafter, the rib 13b is compressed at both sidewalls, thus having a folded and compact rectangular cross-section as described above. The center rib 13b may be thus so-called a folded rib. In accordance with a compression force applied to the rib 13b, the folded cross-section of

10 the rib 13b may become a triangular cross-section or a tightly compressed cross-section. In the primary embodiment, only one folded rib 13b is formed on the U-shaped opener part 13. However, it should be understood that two or more folded ribs 13b may be formed on the

15 opener part 13 so as to further improve the stiffness of the opener part 13. The U-shaped opener part 13, with two or more folded ribs 13b, may be preferably used with a highly pressurized can.

In the present invention, the thumb-operable

20 resilient dome 6 may have a simple domed configuration without having any reaction rim 6a as shown in Fig. 2a. However, it is more preferable to continuously form a reaction rim 6a, having an appropriate width, along the outside edge of the resilient dome 6 as shown in Figs. 2b

25 and 2c. Such a reaction rim 6a allows the dome 6 to more effectively perform a resilient reaction when the dome 6 is pressed down by a thumb.

In order to open and empty a beverage can with the above-mentioned sanitary cover 8, the resilient dome 6 is

30 primarily pressed down by a thumb. The position of the sanitary cover 8 is changed from the closed position of Fig. 1c to a raised position of Fig. 1d. That is, the cover part of the sanitary cover 8 is elastically raised up due to a reaction force of the dome 6, thus being

35 spaced apart from the top lid 50 as shown in Fig. 1d. Therefore, it is easy for a user to grasp and handle the cover 8 when levering up the cover 8 to press down the opening piece 3a using the opener part 13. When the cover 8 is levered up as described above, the cover 8 is

40 bent up along the two bending lines 10 as shown in Fig.

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1a, with the U-shaped and reinforced opener part 13 to press down the opening piece 3a. The opening piece 3a is thus broken along the depressed seam 3c. In such a case, the depressed seam 3c is not continuously formed around
5 the opening piece 3a, but has a bridge 3b at a position around the locking member 3. Therefore, when the opening piece 3a is fully pressed down by the opener part 13 of the cover 8, the piece 3a is not removed from the top lid 50, but is still connected to the top lid 50. At any
10 rate, the opening piece 3a forms an opening defined by the seam 3c, thus allowing the user to empty the can.

In accordance with still another embodiment of this invention, a second reaction means, or a reaction slit 6b may be formed on the top portion of the thumb-operable
15 resilient dome 6 as shown in Figs. 3a to 3c. Such a second reaction means 6b allows the dome 6 to more effectively perform a resilient reaction when the dome 6 is pressed down by a thumb in the same manner as that described for the first reaction means 6a. The second
20 reaction means 6b may have any profile, such as a circular, a slot-shaped or a cross-shaped profile, if the profile allows the dome 6 to more effectively perform a resilient reaction. The second reaction means 6b may be formed in a way such that the top portion of the dome 6
25 is completely penetrated as shown in Fig. 5a, thus forming an opening 6i. Alternatively, the second reaction means 6b may be formed in a way such that the top portion of the dome 6 is slitted as shown in Fig. 5b, thus forming a slit 6j. In addition, the second reaction
30 means 6b may be formed by irregularly embossing and depressing the top portion of the dome 6.

In accordance with still another embodiment of this invention, the rounded top portion of the thumb-operable resilient dome 6 may be changed into another configuration
35 as shown in Figs. 4a to 4d. In the embodiment of Fig. 4a, the top portion of the dome 6 is designed to be flat, thus having a flat surface 6e. In the embodiment of Fig. 4b, the top portion of the dome 6 is designed to have a nipple 6f at the top center. In the embodiment of Fig.
40 4c, the top portion of the dome 6 is designed to lean to

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a side, thus having a leaning surface 6g. In the embodiment of Fig. 4d, the top portion of the dome 6 is designed to have a smoothly depressed surface 6h at the top center. The flat top surface 6e, the nipple 6f, the 5 leaning surface 6g, or the depressed top surface 6h improves the resilient reaction of the dome 6.

In still another embodiment, the reinforcing means of the U-shaped opener part 13 may comprise only one folded rib 13b formed along the central axis of the 10 opener part 13 as shown in Figs. 6a and 6b. The sanitary cover 8, having such a single reinforcing rib 13b at the U-shaped opener part 13, may be used with a lowly pressurized can, for example, a can filled with beverage other than carbonated drink. Such a single reinforcing 15 rib 13b simplifies the production process and reduces the production cost of the sanitary cover 8. This results in a reduction in the production cost of the beverage cans.

In a further embodiment, the reinforcing means of the U-shaped opener part 13 may comprise two folded ribs 13b 20 extending in parallel to each other as shown in Fig. 7. The two reinforcing ribs 13b further improve the stiffness of the U-shaped opener part 13 in comparison with the embodiment of Figs. 6a and 6b, thus being preferably used with a can pressurized higher than that of Figs. 6a and 25 6b.

As a further alternative, the reinforcing means of the U-shaped opener part 13 may comprise three rounded ribs 13c extending in parallel to each other as shown in Fig. 8.

30 As described above, it is possible to freely design the reinforcing means for the U-shaped opener part 13 in accordance with the interior pressure acting on the opening piece 3a of the top lid 50.

Of course, it should be understood that the number 35 and arrangement of the reinforcing ribs 13b and 13c may be somewhat freely changed without affecting the function of this invention. For example, the reinforcing means for the opener part 13 may comprise a plurality of folded ribs 13b without having any rounded ribs 13c.

40 Alternatively, the reinforcing means for the opener part

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13 may comprise one or more folded ribs 13b and one or more rounded ribs 13c in a way such that three or more reinforcing ribs 13b and 13c are alternately arranged on the U-shaped opener part 13. In a brief description, the 5 reinforcing means for the opener part 13 may be freely designed in accordance with the size of an objective can, the interior pressure of the can, and the size of the opener part 13 relative to the opening piece 3a.

In still another embodiment, the sanitary cover 8 of 10 this invention may be attached to the top lid 50 using two or more locking members 3 as shown in Fig. 9. This embodiment increases the locking force between the sanitary cover 8 and the top lid 50, thus being preferably used with a large-sized can. The two or more 15 locking members 3 also prevent the sanitary cover 8 from being undesirably displaced.

In the present invention, a rugged pattern 30, comprising a plurality of embossments and/or depressions, may be formed on the U-shaped opener part 13 of the 20 sanitary cover 8 as shown in Figs. 10 and 11. The embossments and/or depressions of the rugged pattern 30 may have a circular, a T-shaped, an L-shaped, a U-shaped, a cross-shaped, or an I-shaped profile. Of course, it should be understood that the rugged pattern 30 may be 25 formed with embossments and/or depressions of the above-mentioned shapes being mixedly arranged on the opener part 13.

In still another embodiment, the opener part 13 may be raised up along the central axis prior to being flatly 30 pressed down, thus forming a reinforcing rib with a double-folded edge 13e being formed at each side edge of the rib as shown in Fig. 12a. Due to the double-folded edges 13e, the reinforcing rib improves the stiffness of the opener part 13 and allows the opener part 13 to 35 reliably break the opening piece 3a along the depressed seam 3c. Alternatively, the U-shaped opener part 13 may be raised up along the central axis prior to being compressed at both sides, thus forming a folded rib having a compact rectangular cross-section as shown in 40 Fig. 12b. As a further alternative, an axial groove may

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be formed along the central axis of the folded rib of Fig. 12b. The opener part 13, with such an axial groove, is shown in Fig. 12c. The strength of the opener part 13 of Fig. 12c is higher than that of Fig. 12b.

5 In a further embodiment, the U-shaped opener part 13 may be designed to have a waved cross-section as shown in Fig. 13. In the embodiment of Fig. 13, the opener part 13 has two ridges 31 with one furrow being formed between the two ridges 31. Even though such ridges 31 fail to
10 have the same complete configuration as that of the two side reinforcing ribs 13c of Fig. 1e, the ridges 31 effectively reinforce the U-shaped opener part 13 and allow the opener part 13 to reliably break the opening piece 3a along the depressed seam 3c.

15 In still another embodiment, the reinforcing means for the U-shaped opener part 13 may comprise a reinforcing dome 13f as shown in Figs. 14a and 14b. In this embodiment, the reinforcing dome 13f is formed on the opener part 13 with the outside edge of the dome 13f reaching the edge of the part 13 and a position just outside the reaction rim of the resilient dome 6. The outside edge of the reinforcing dome 13f may have a circular or an oval configuration. In a further embodiment, the reinforcing dome 13f of the opener part 25 13 may be shaped as an angled dome as shown in Figs. 14c and 14d. The reinforcing dome 13f according to the embodiment of Fig. 14c has a rectangular cross-section, while the reinforcing dome 13f according to the embodiment of Fig. 14d has a triangular cross-section. Such an 30 angled reinforcing dome of Fig. 14c or 14d more effectively reinforces the opener part 13 than the rounded reinforcing dome of Figs. 14a and 14b, thus being preferably used with a can which is highly pressurized and forces the opener part 13 to have a higher strength.

35 Fig. 15 shows a reinforcing means for the U-shaped opener part 13 in accordance with still another embodiment of this invention. In this embodiment, the opener part 13 is raised up along the central axis prior to being flat pressed down, thus forming a reinforcing rib with a 40 double-folded edge 13e being formed at each side edge of

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the rib. That is, each edge 13e is primarily folded at a portion 13g, and is secondarily folded at a portion 13h, thus having a double-folded cross-section. The above double-folded reinforcing rib further improves the 5 stiffness of the opener part 13 in comparison with the single-folded rib 13b, thus being preferably used with a highly pressurized can.

The depressed cutting line 24, defining the U-shaped opener part 13 on the sanitary cover 8, is formed on the 10 sanitary cover 8 at an intermediate portion between the locking member 3 and the dome 6 as shown in Fig. 16. The above cutting line 24 may be completely cut, thus reliably forming the opener part 13 when the sanitary cover 8 is levered up so as to break the opening piece 3a 15 along the depressed seam 3c. Alternatively, the cutting line 24 may be depressed without being completely cut, thus forming a depressed seam capable of keeping the lip contact portion around the opening piece 3a sanitary during storage of the can. In addition, the cutting line 20 24 may be formed by pressing the sanitary cover 8 from the lower surface of the cover 8, thus having a reversed V-shaped cross-section. Alternatively, the cutting line 24 may be formed by pressing the sanitary cover 8 from the upper surface of the cover 8, thus having an upright 25 V-shaped cross-section. In the present invention, the cutting line 24 may have a U-shaped profile or another profile modified from the U-shaped profile. Since the outside edge of the sanitary cover 8 is rolled so as to form a rounded and smooth edge free from undesirably 30 injuring the fingers of a user, the depressed bending line 10 of the sanitary cover 8 may fail to be easily bent at the rolled outside edge of the cover 8 when the cover 8 is levered up. In order to overcome the above problem, the depressed bending line 10 may be partially 35 cut at the rolled outside edge during the manufacturing process of the can. This allows the sanitary cover 8 to be easily bent along the depressed bending line 10 when the cover 8 is levered up to break the opening piece 3a.

As shown in Figs. 17a and 17b, the thumb-operable 40 resilient dome 6 of this invention may be used with a

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conventional can opener 101 or a conventional one-touch can opener 101', which is attached to the top lid of a can using a locking means in the same manner as that described for the sanitary cover 8 of this invention, but 5 is not designed to completely cover the opening piece 3a different from the sanitary cover 8. That is, the dome 6 is formed on the opener 101 at a position between the outside end 103 and an arcuate slit 104 of the opener 101. When the resilient dome 6 is pressed down by a 10 thumb, the opener 101 is elastically raised up due to a reaction force of the dome 6, thus being spaced apart from the top lid 50. Therefore, it is easy for a user to grasp and handle the opener 101 when levering up the opener 101 to press down the opening piece 3a. The above 15 resilient dome 6 may be designed to have a flat top surface, a nipple, a leaning surface, or a depressed top surface in the same manner as that described for the embodiments of Figs. 4a to 4d. Of course, the objective of the flat top surface, the nipple, the leaning surface, 20 or the depressed top surface is to improve the resilient reaction of the dome, and is freely designed to give an appropriate reaction force to the dome 6 in accordance with the size and pressure of the can. In addition, the above dome 6 may have a regular or irregular pattern 25 capable of allowing the dome 6 to more stably and reliably perform a desired elastic reaction. The dome 6 also may be designed to have the same reaction rim 6a as that described for the sanitary cover 8 or to be free from such a reaction rim 6a. The opener 101, having the 30 thumb-operable resilient dome 6, may be rotatably attached to the top lid 50 of a can in a way such that the opener 101 is normally positioned on the opening piece 3a so as to cover the opening piece 3a and is selectively rotated to a levering position where the opener 101 is levered up 35 to break the opening piece 3a along the depressed seam 3c.

Industrial Applicability

As described above, the present invention provides

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a top lid for beverage cans with an opener integrated sanitary cover. The sanitary cover is designed to cover the area around the opening piece defined on the top lid by a depressed seam, thus protecting the lip contact portion of the top lid from atmospheric impurities and keeping the can sanitary during storage of the can. The sanitary cover has a reinforced opener part which presses down the opening piece and breaks the piece along the depressed seam when the cover is levered up. The opener part has a reinforcing means improving the stiffness of the opener part, and so the opener part reliably breaks the opening piece without failure even though a high pressure acts on the interior surface of the opening piece. Therefore, the sanitary cover acts as a one-touch opener while opening the can. In the present invention, the configuration and arrangement of the reinforcing means for the opener part may be freely changed in accordance with the designing conditions of the can, or the interior pressure acting on the opening piece and the size of the can. The thumb-operable resilient dome of this invention may be preferably used with a conventional lever opener attached to the top lid. In such a case, the lever opener is elastically raised up when the dome is pressed down by a thumb. It is thus easy for a user to grasp and handle the opener while levering up the opener to open the top lid of the can.

Although the preferred embodiments of the present invention have been disclosed for illustrative purposes, those skilled in the art will appreciate that various modifications, additions and substitutions are possible, without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention as disclosed in the accompanying claims.

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Claims:

1. A top lid for beverage cans, comprising a sanitary cover attached to the top lid using a locking member and adapted for keeping a lip contact portion of
5 the top lid sanitary during storage of the can, wherein said sanitary cover comprises:

a thin plate body having a sanitary cover part at an outside end portion thereof and exteriorly attached to the top lid at an inside end portion thereof using said
10 locking member, thus covering an opening piece, defined on the top lid by a depressed seam, while covering the lip contact portion around the opening piece by the sanitary cover part;

15 a thumb-operable resilient dome formed on the sanitary cover part and adapted for elastically raising the cover part above the top lid when the dome is pressed down;

20 an opener part defined on the thin plate body by a cutting line at an intermediate position between the locking member and the dome;

25 a depressed bending line formed on the thin plate body while transversely and linearly extending outwardly from each end of said cutting line to an outside edge of the thin plate body, with the thin plate body being bendable along said bending line when the cover is levered up so as to break the opening piece along the depressed seam using the opener part; and

30 reinforcing means for improving stiffness of said opener part, thus allowing the opener part to break the opening piece along the depressed seam without failure.

2. The top lid according to claim 1, wherein said sanitary cover part of the thin plate body reaches a position just inside a rim of the can, said rim seaming a junction between the top lid and a sidewall of the can.

35 3. The top lid according to claim 1, wherein said sanitary cover part of the thin plate body reaches a boundary of said opening piece.

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4. The top lid according to claim 1, wherein the outside edge of said sanitary cover part is closely seated in a seating groove, formed on the top lid at a position inside an interior wall of a seamed rim of said can, while being inserted into the seating groove to a length equal to a thickness of said sanitary cover part.

5. The top lid according to claim 1, wherein a top wall of said top lid has a flat surface, with the sanitary cover being attached to the flat top wall using 10 the locking member.

6. The top lid according to claim 1, wherein said reinforcing means comprises a first reinforcing rib having a folded and compact rectangular cross-section, said first reinforcing rib axially formed on said opener part within 15 a range from an outside edge of said opener part to a position just outside said resilient dome.

7. The top lid according to claim 1, wherein said reinforcing means comprises a second reinforcing rib having an arcuate cross-section, said second reinforcing 20 rib axially formed on said opener part within a range from an outside edge of said opener part to a position just outside said resilient dome.

8. The top lid according to claim 1, wherein said reinforcing means comprises first and second reinforcing 25 ribs respectively having a folded and compact rectangular cross-section and an arcuate cross-section, said first and second reinforcing ribs axially and parallelly formed on said opener part within a range from an outside edge of said opener part to a position just outside said 30 resilient dome.

9. The top lid according to claim 1, wherein said reinforcing means comprises a regular or irregular rugged pattern consisting of a plurality of embossments and depressions formed on said opener part.

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10. The top lid according to claim 1, wherein said cutting line is depressed to form a depressed seam, or is completely cut to form a slit.

11. The top lid according to claim 1, wherein said sanitary cover is attached to the top lid using two or more locking members.

12. The top lid according to claim 1, wherein said resilient dome has both a reaction rim formed along an outside edge of the resilient dome and a reaction slit formed on a top portion of the resilient dome, both the reaction rim and the reaction slit allowing the resilient dome to stably and reliably perform a desired elastic reaction.

15 13. The top lid according to claim 1, wherein said resilient dome has a hemispherical profile or another profile modified from the hemispherical profile.

20 14. The top lid according to claim 1, wherein said cutting line forms an arcuate profile or another profile modified from the arcuate profile.

15. A top lid for beverage cans, comprising an opening piece defined by a depressed seam and selectively broken along the depressed seam so as to form an opening on the top lid, and an opener attached to the top lid using a locking member with an inside end of the opener being positioned on the opening piece to press down the opening piece when necessary and an outside end being positioned inside an interior wall of a seamed rim of said top lid, wherein a thumb-operable resilient dome is formed on said opener at a position between said outside end and an arcuate slit formed around the locking member.

35 16. The top lid according to claim 15, wherein a reaction rim is formed along an outside edge of said resilient dome so as to allow the dome to stably and reliably perform a desired elastic reaction, and said

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inside end of the opener extends until it reaches a position just inside the depressed seam.

17. The top lid according to claim 1 or 15, wherein a top portion of said resilient dome has a hemispherical profile or another profile modified from the hemispherical profile, with a regular or irregular slit being formed on said top portion of the dome, thus allowing the dome to stably and reliably perform a desired elastic reaction.

18. The top lid according to claim 15, wherein said 10 opener is rotatably attached to the top lid using the locking member in a way such that the opener is normally positioned on the opening piece so as to cover the opening piece and is selectively rotated to a levering 15 position where the opener is levered up to break the opening piece along the depressed seam.

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FIG. 1A

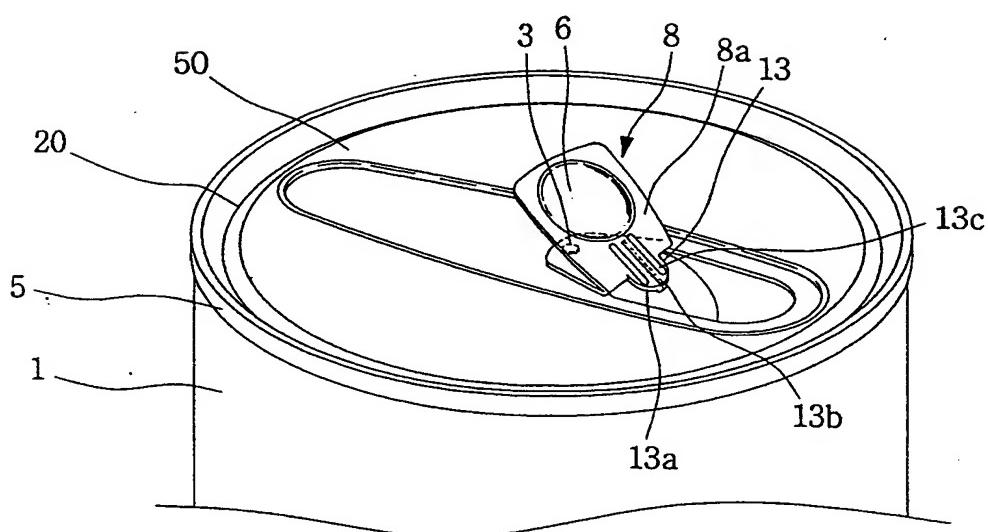
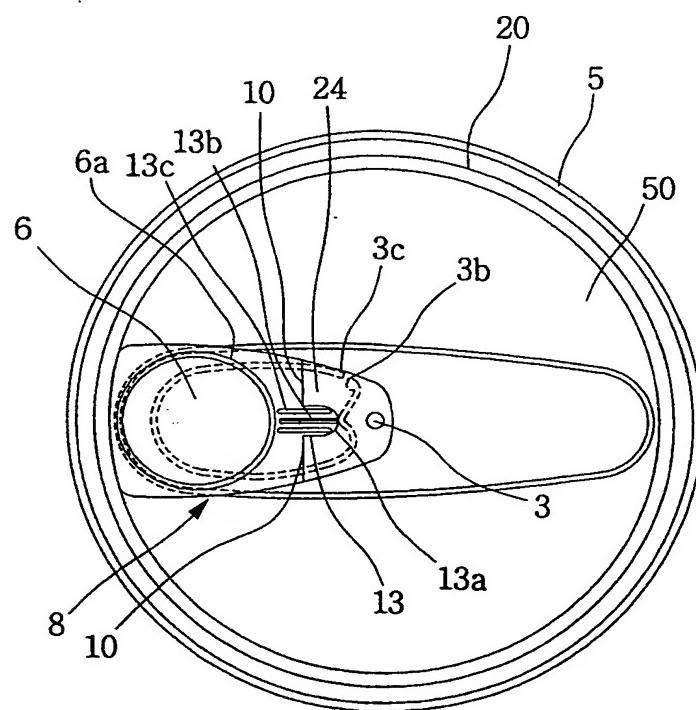


FIG. 1B



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FIG. 1C

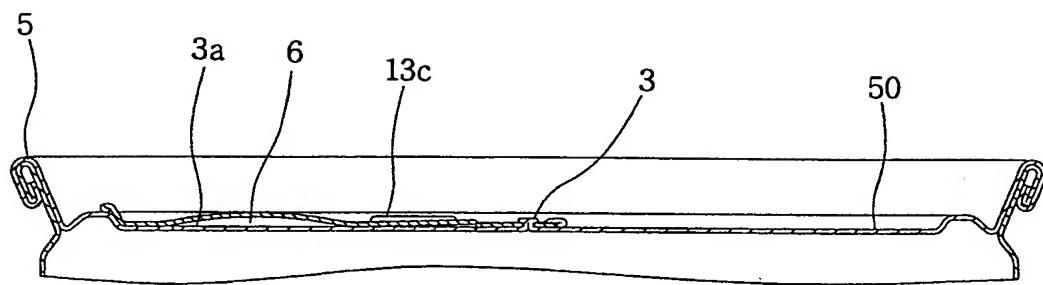


FIG. 1D

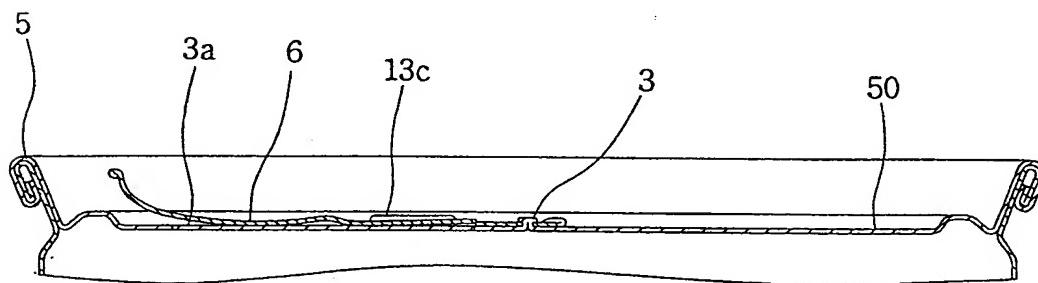
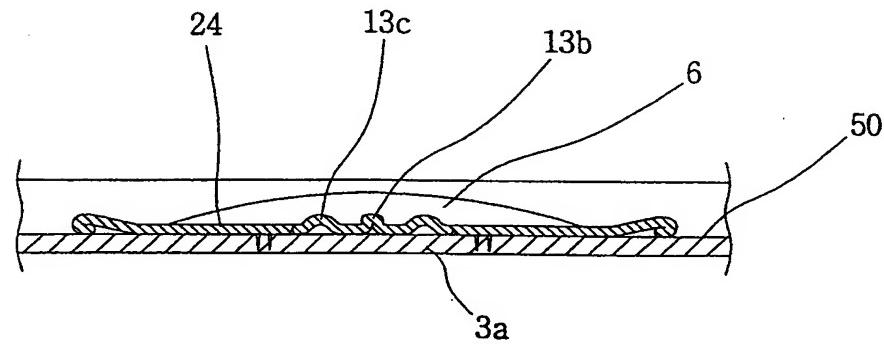


FIG. 1E



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FIG. 1F

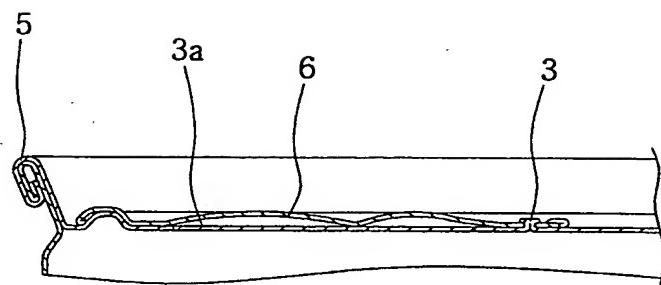


FIG. 1G

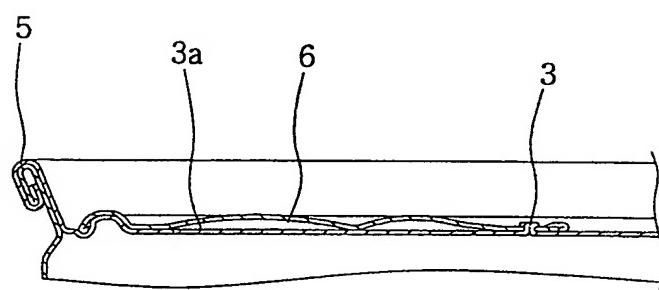
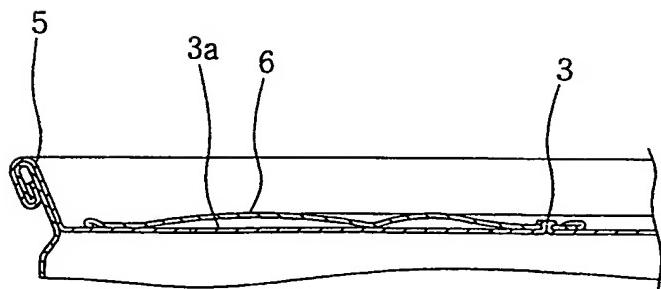


FIG. 1H



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FIG. 1I

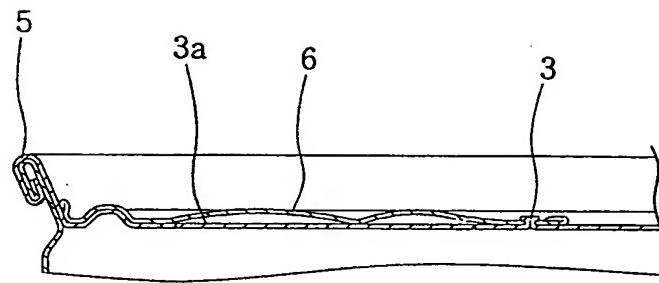
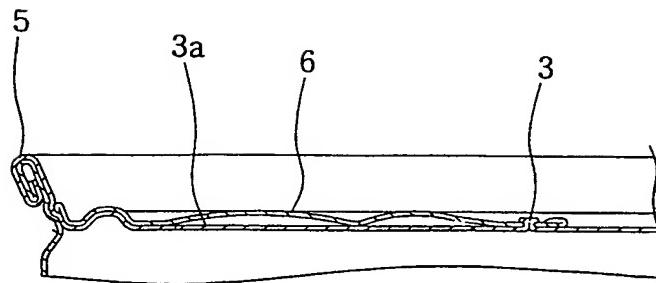


FIG. 1J



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FIG.2A

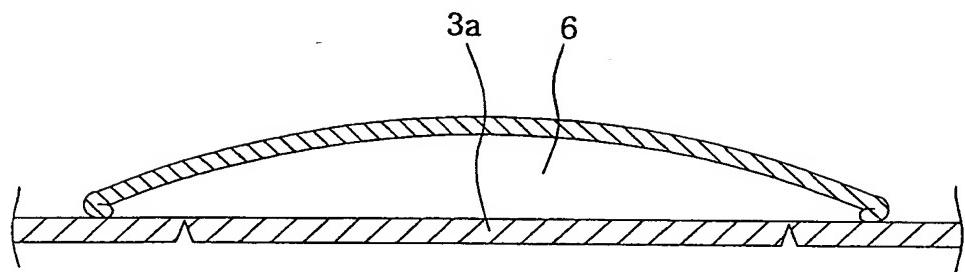


FIG.2B

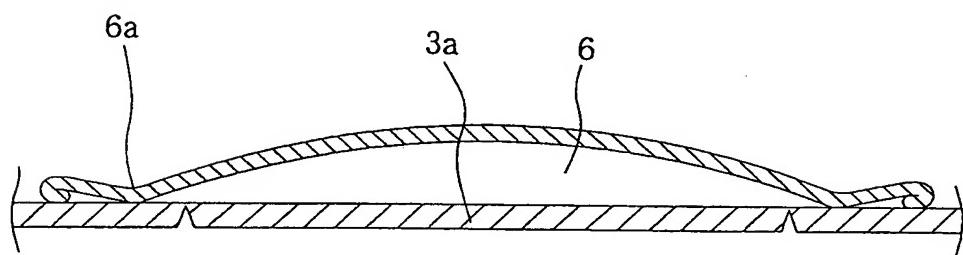
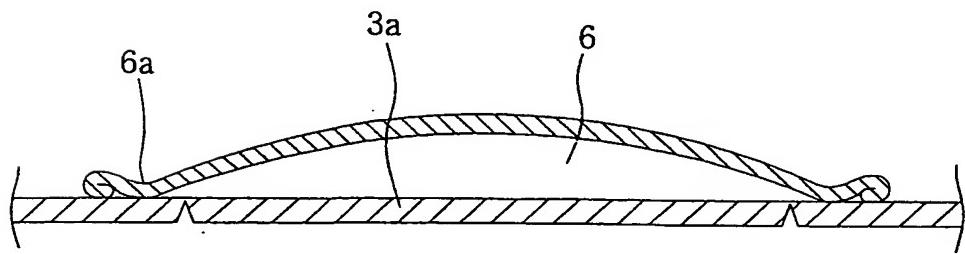


FIG.2C



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FIG. 3A

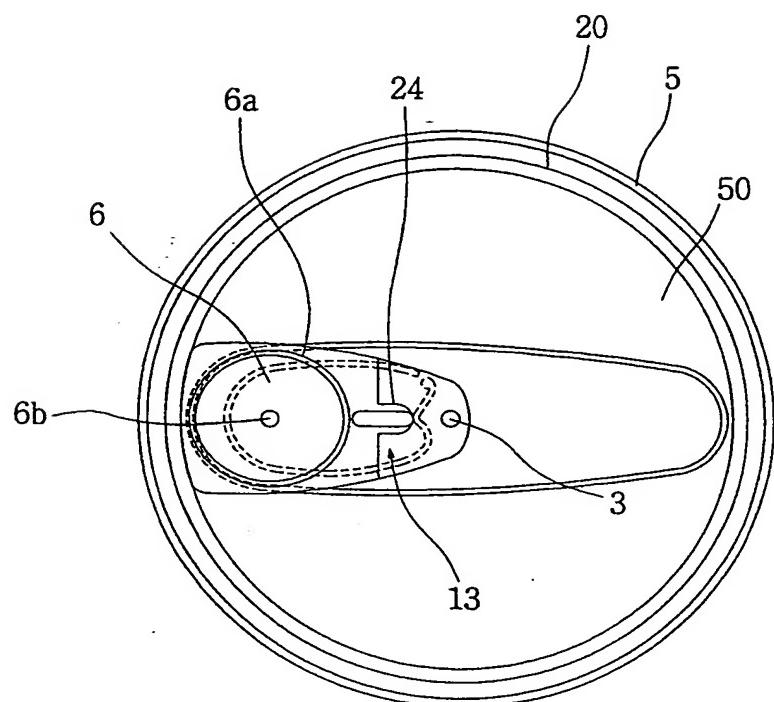
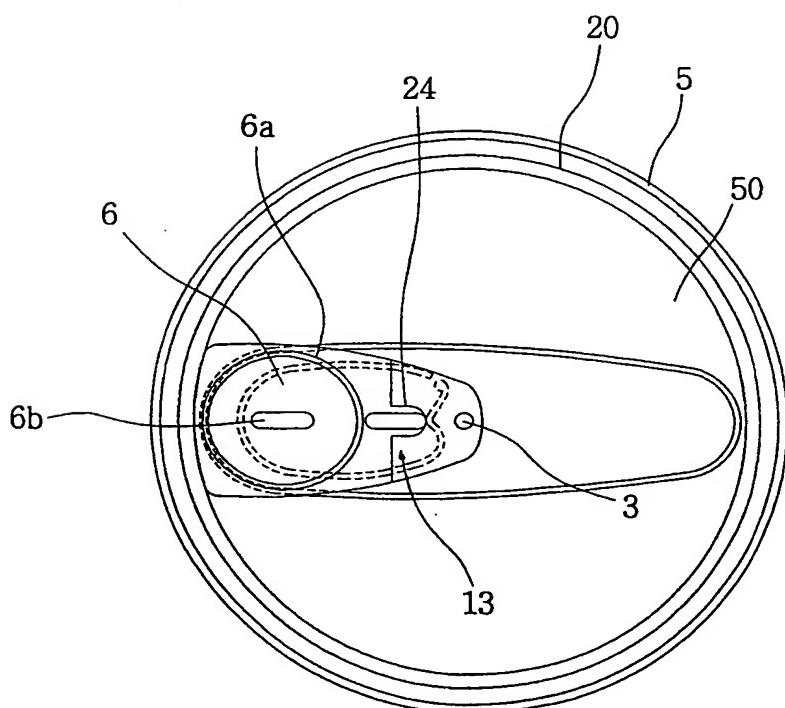
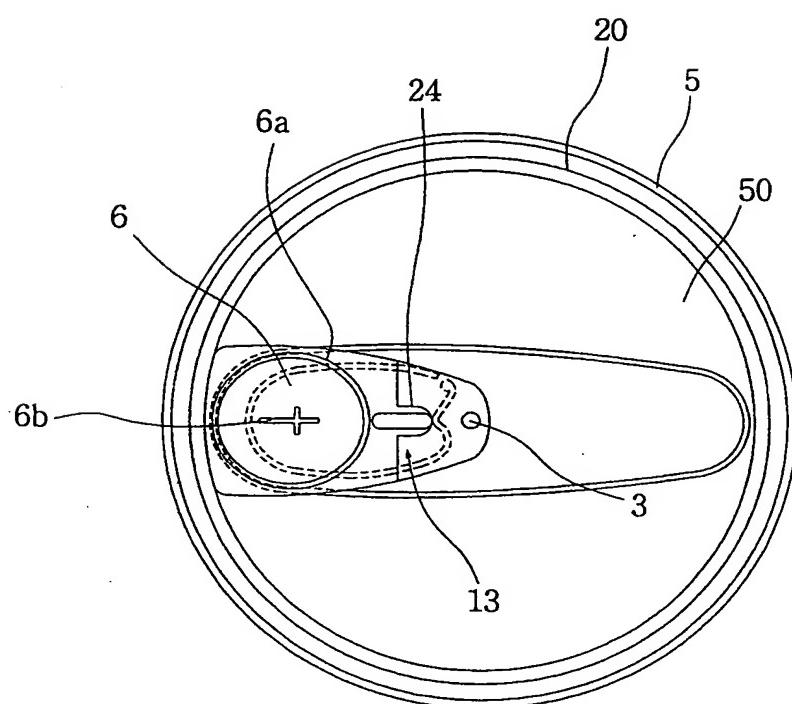


FIG. 3B



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FIG. 3C



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FIG. 4A

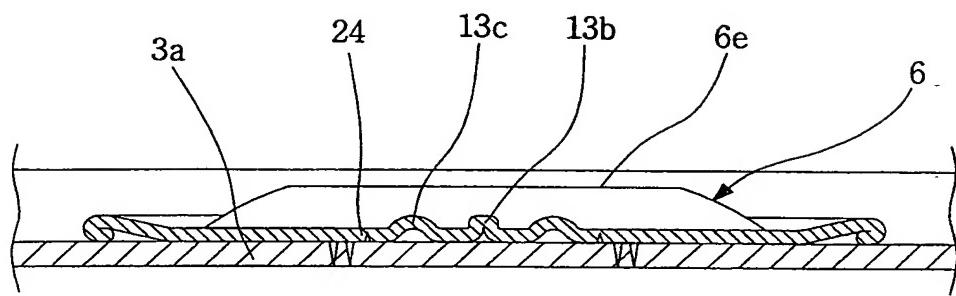
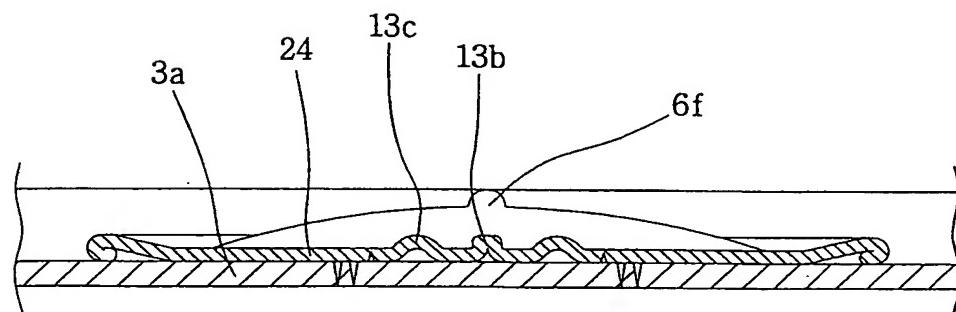


FIG. 4B



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FIG. 4C

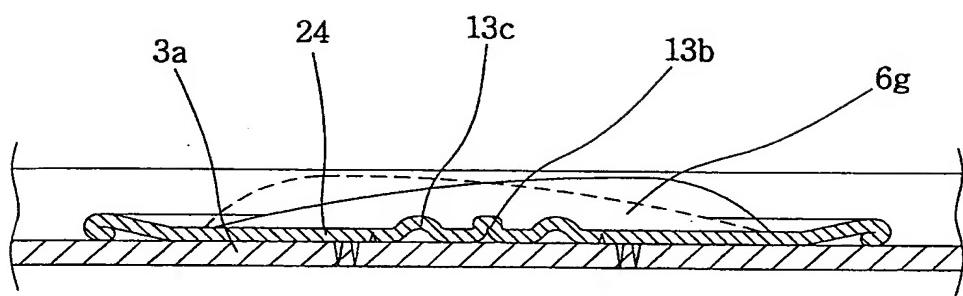
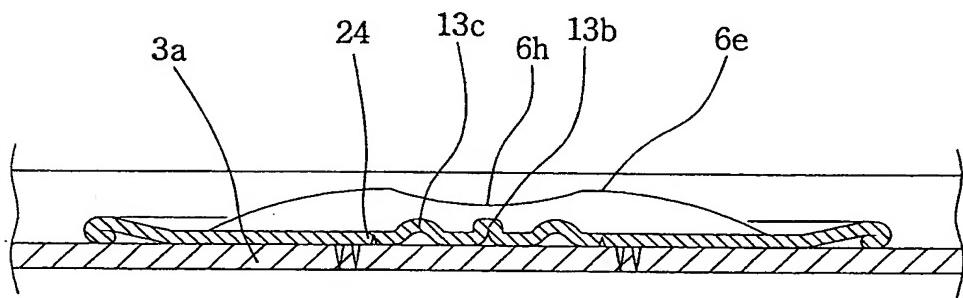


FIG. 4D



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FIG.5A

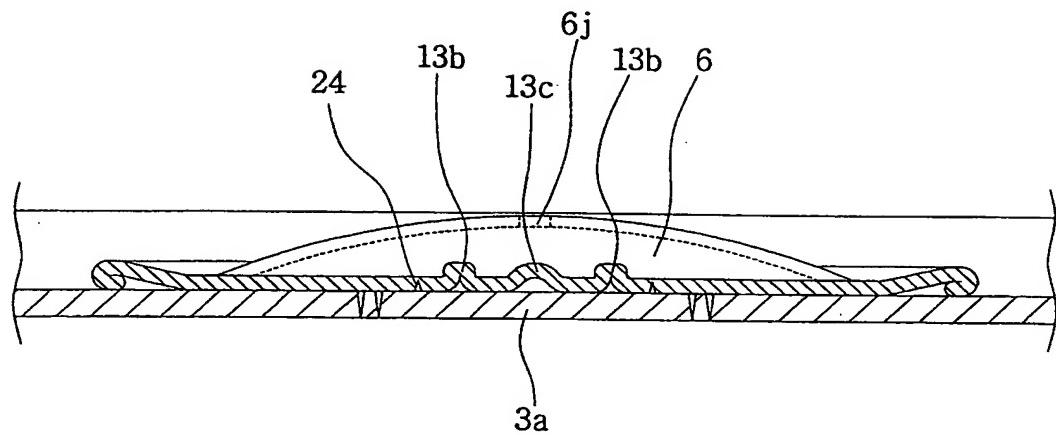
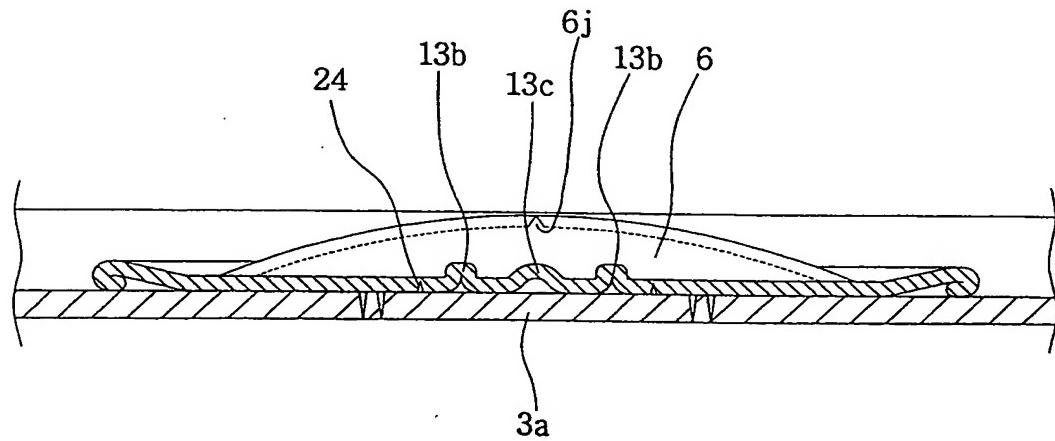


FIG.5B



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FIG. 6A

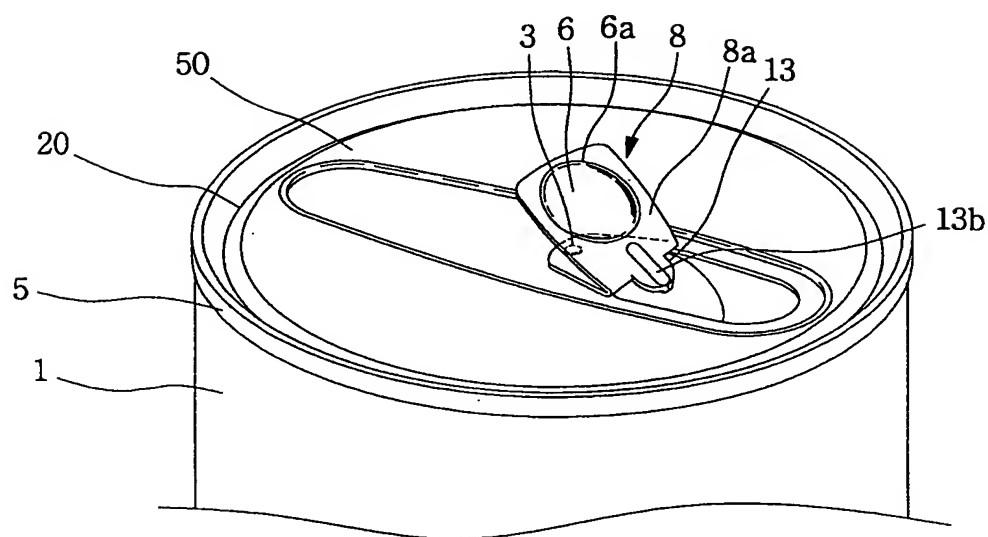
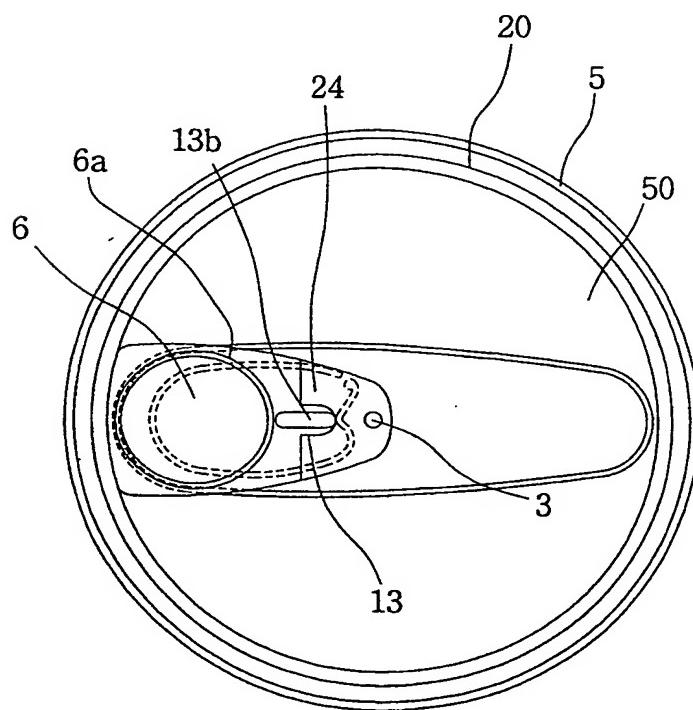


FIG. 6B



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FIG.7

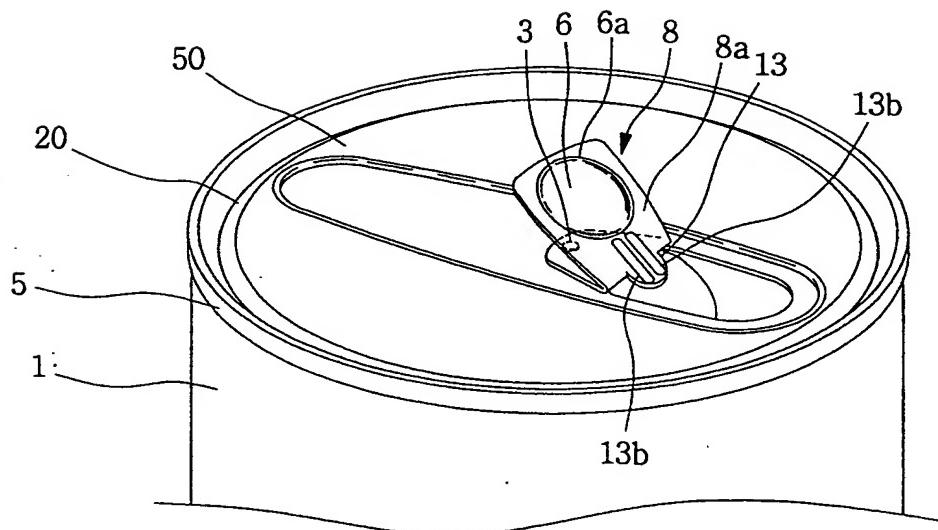
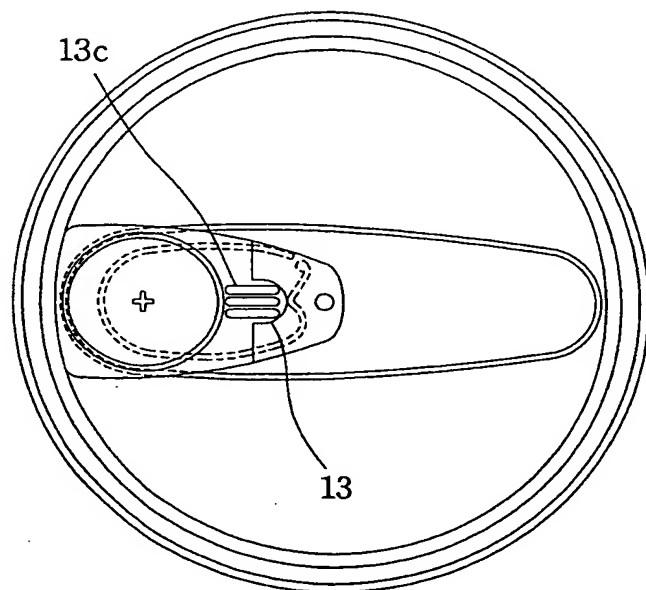
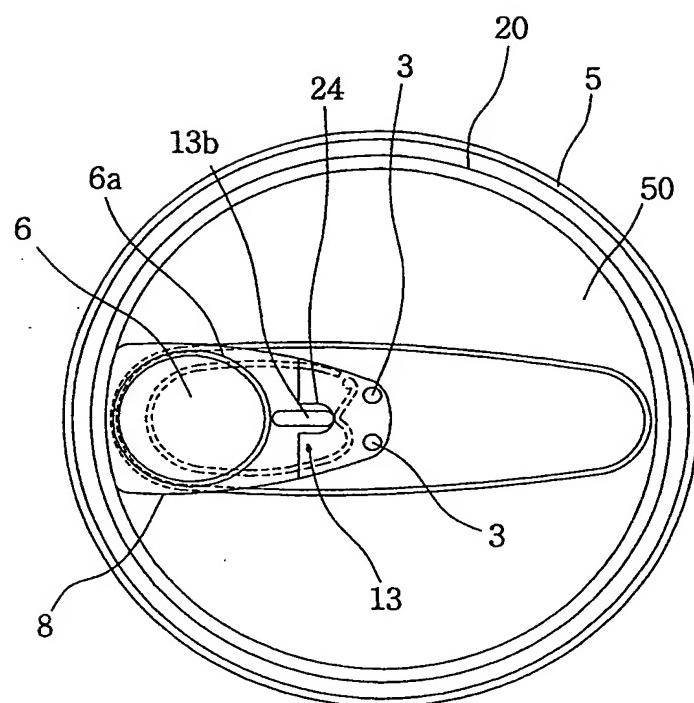


FIG.8



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FIG.9



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FIG. 10

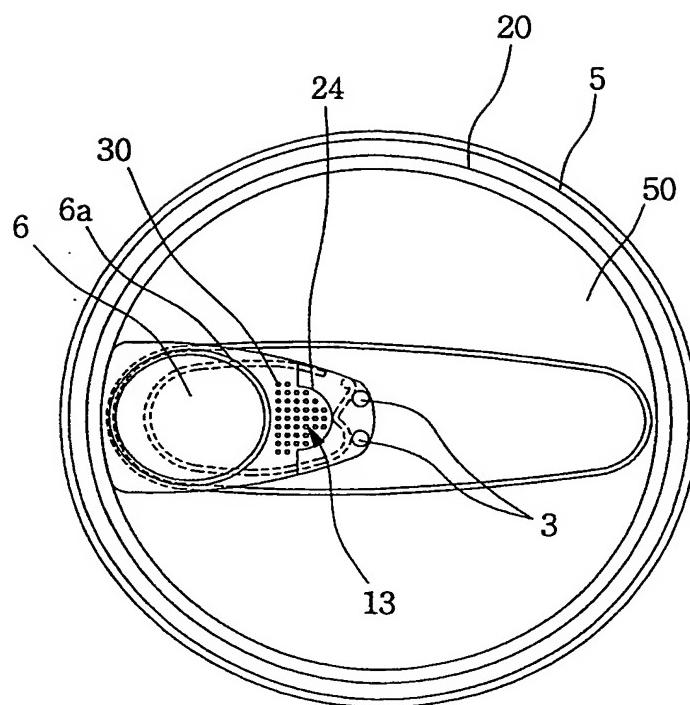
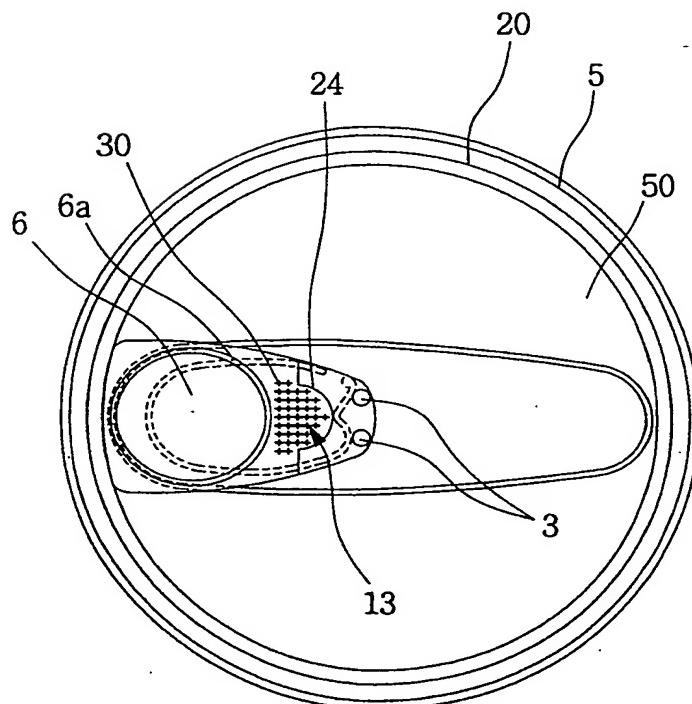


FIG. 11



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FIG. 12A

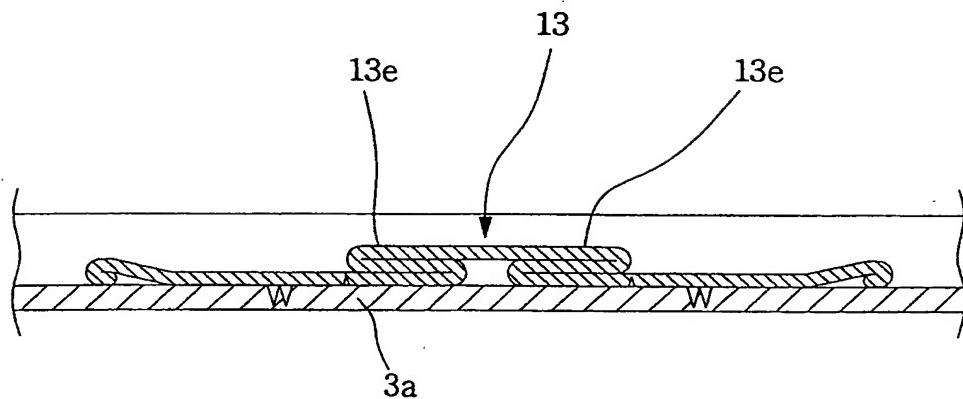
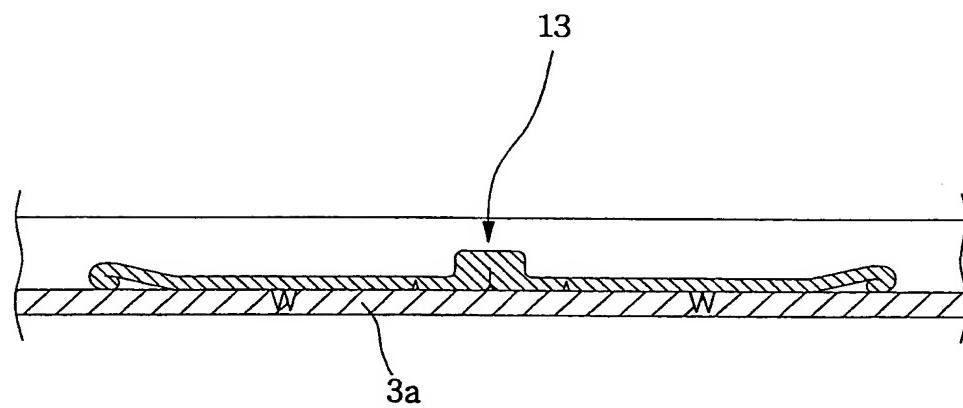


FIG. 12B



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FIG. 12C

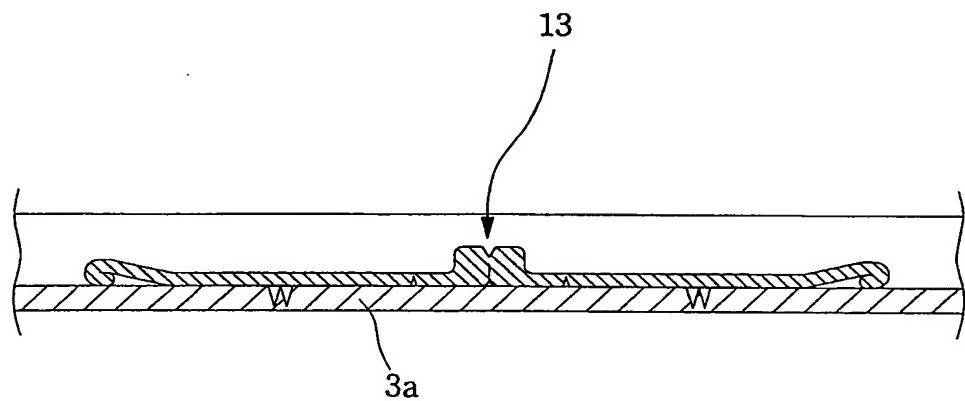
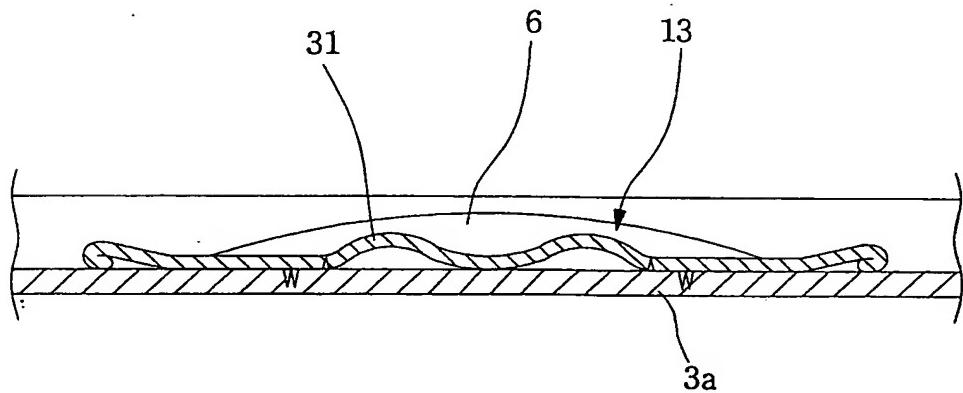


FIG. 13



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FIG. 14A

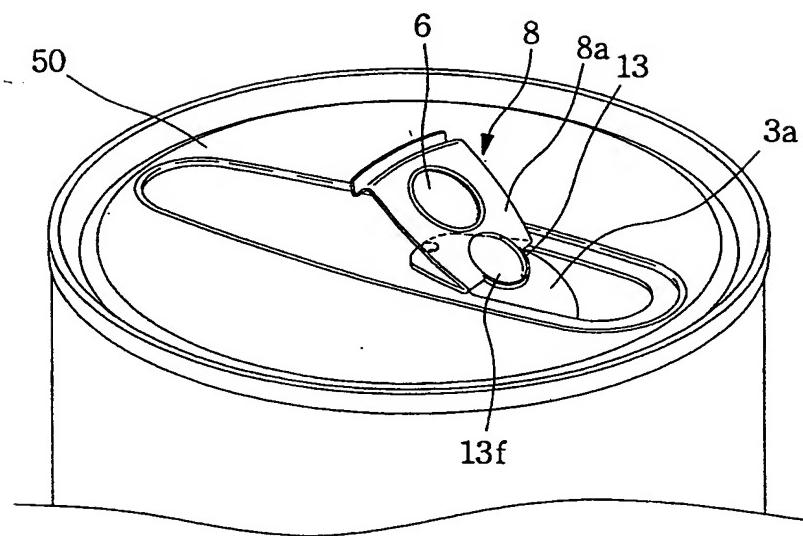
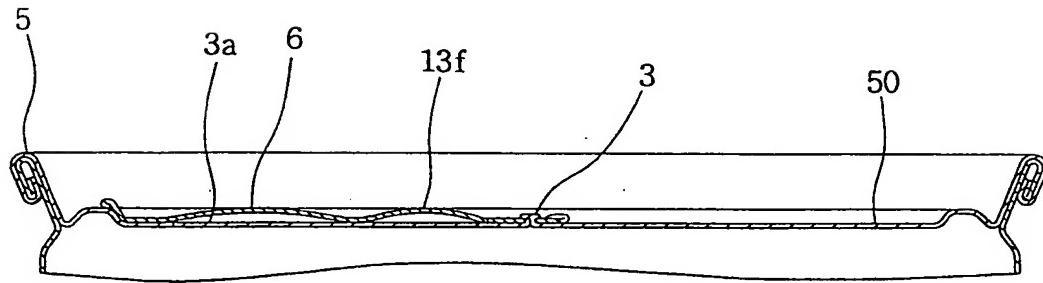


FIG. 14B



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FIG. 14C

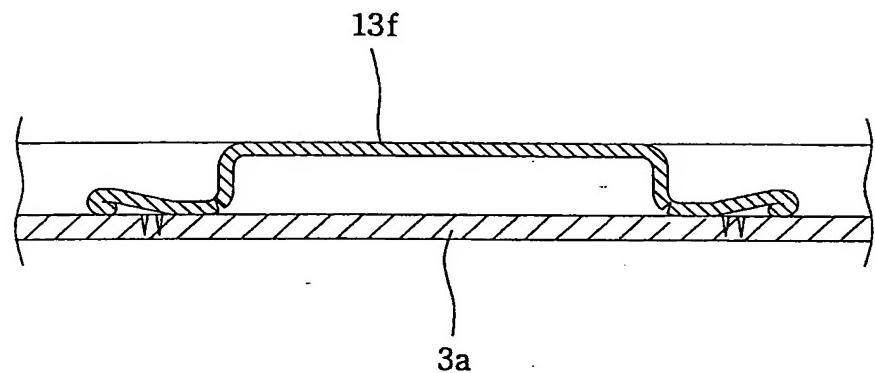


FIG. 14D

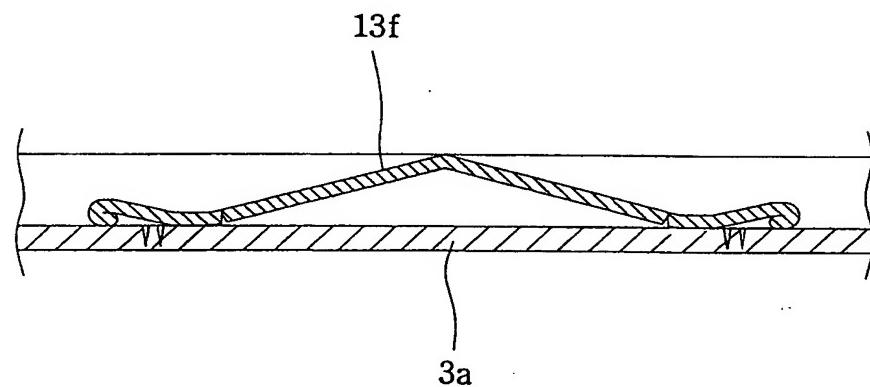
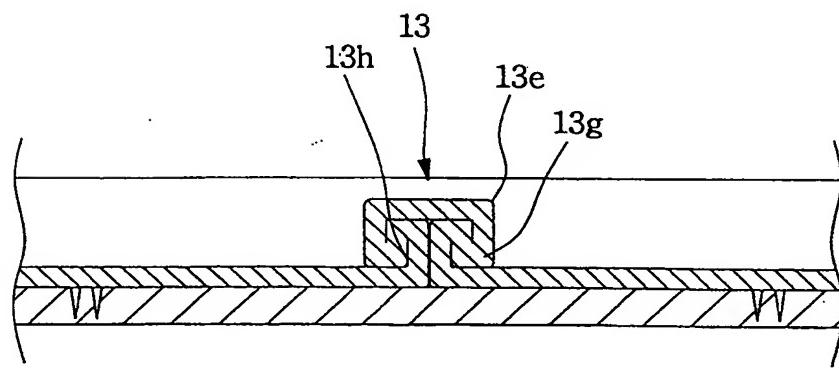
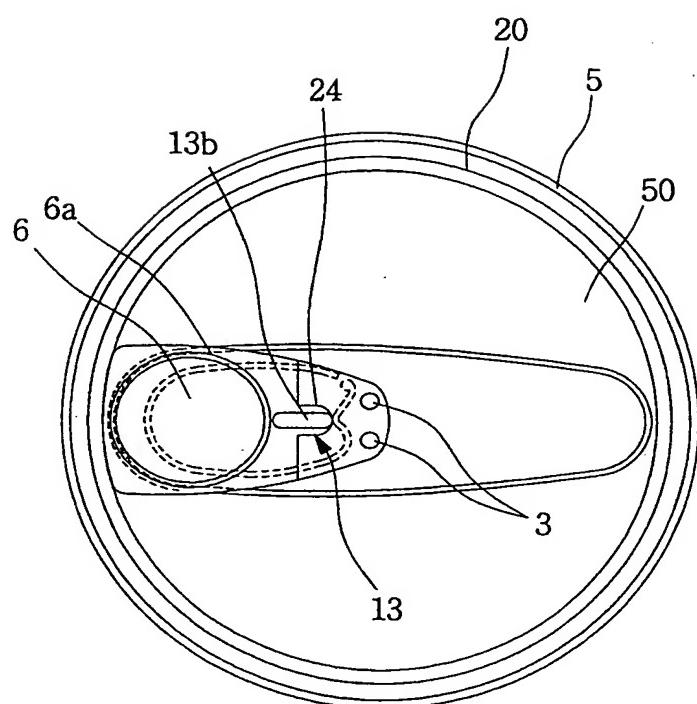


FIG. 15



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FIG. 16



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FIG. 17A

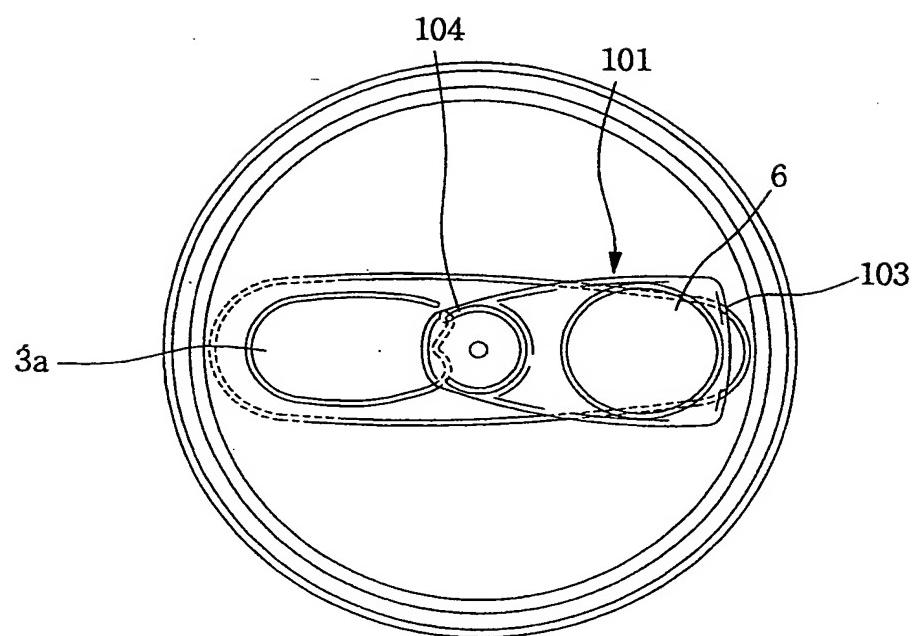
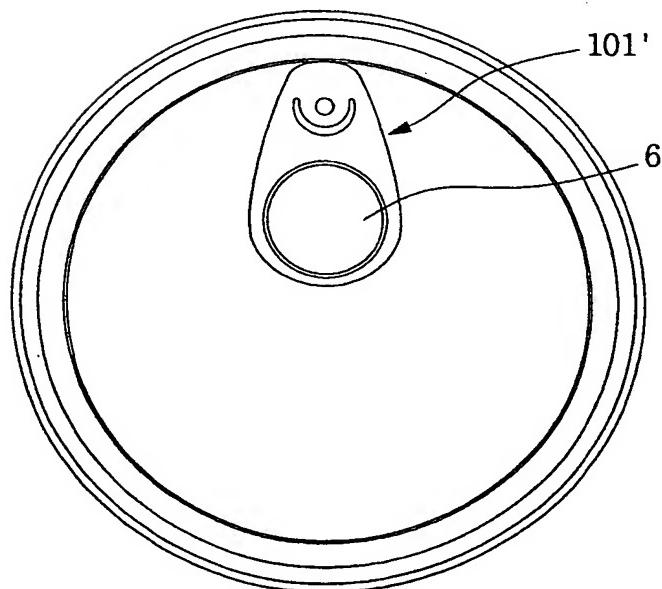


FIG. 17B



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/KR 99/00201

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC⁶: B 65 D 17/50, 17/34

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC⁶: B 65 D

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

WPI, PAJ, EPDOC

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 5 335 808 A (LEE), 09 August 1994 (09.08.94), abstract; fig.1-6.	1-18
A	US 4 480 763 A (SCHNEIDER), 06 November 1984 (06.11.84), fig.1-3.	1-18
A	US 4 880 137 A (WELLS), 14 November 1989 (14.11.89), fig.1-3,10,11E,13B-15B,21B-21E.	1-18
A	GB 2 085 394 A (THE CONTINENTAL GROUP), 28 April 1982 (28.04.82), fig.1-7.	1-18

Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

See patent family annex.

„A“ document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	„T“ later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
„E“ earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date	„X“ document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
„L“ document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	„Y“ document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
„O“ document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	„&“ document member of the same patent family
„P“ document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

Date of the actual completion of the international search

28 June 1999 (28.06.99)

Date of mailing of the international search report

03 August 1999 (03.08.99)

Name and mailing address of the ISA/AT
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Authorized officer
Werner
Telephone No. 1/53424/357

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No.

PCT/KR 99/00201

In Recherchenbericht angeführtes Patentdokument Patent document cited in search report	Datum der Veröffentlichung Publication date	Mitglied(er) der Patentfamilie Patent family member(s)	Datum der Veröffentlichung Publication date
Document de brevet cité dans le rapport de recherche	Date de publication	Membre(s) de la famille de brevets	Date de publication
US A 5335808	09-08-1994	keine - none - rien	
US A 4480763	06-11-1984	keine - none - rien	
US A 4880137	14-11-1989	US A 4865215 US A 4877129 US A 4887712 US A 4821912	12-09-1989 31-10-1989 19-12-1989 18-04-1989
GB A 2085394		DE A1 3139623 DE C2 3139623 GB A1 2085394 US A 4325490	24-06-1982 09-04-1987 28-04-1982 20-04-1982

Hungarian Patent Office

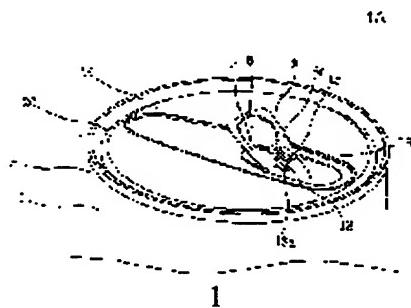
PIPACS 2006/2.

Date of query: 2006.03.07*Query string:* P0104459*Number of hits:* 1 application

Lapsed

Application number: **P0104459***Application date:* 1999.04.28*Publication date:* 2002.03.28*Convention priority:* KR1998/15387 - 1998.04.29

KR1999/12571 - 1999.04.09

PCT Application number: KR9900201*PCT Publication number (WO):* 9955591*IPC:* B65D-017/50; B65D-017/34*Hungarian title:* Felső fedél italos dobozhoz tisztaságvédő borítóelemmel integrált nyitószerkezzel*English title:* TOP LID FOR BEVERAGE CANS WITH OPENER INTEGRATED SANITARY COVER*Applicant:* Bongjeong Cantech Co., Ltd., Szöul (KR)*Inventor:* Cho, Sung Ho, Kyongki-do (KR)*Representative:* Kovács Gábor, DANUBIA Szabadalmi és Védjegy Iroda Kft., Budapest (HU)***Abstract (first publication):***

A találmány tárgya felső fedél (50) italosdobozhoz (1), amely a felső fedélhez (50) rögzítőelemmel (3) kapcsolt tisztaságvédő elemet (8) tartalmaz. A tisztaságvédő elem (8) a felső fedél (50) ajakkal érintkező részét a doboz (1) tárolása közben tisztántartó módon van kiképezve.

A tisztántartó elem tartalmaz egy vékony lemeztestet (8a), amelynek külső végső részén tisztaságot védő fedőrésze van és belső végénél fogva kívülről kapcsolódik a rögzítőelemnél (3) fogva a felső fedélhez (50), és ezáltal a felső fedélben (50) nyomott törésvonal (3c) által meghatározott nyitódarabot (3a) fed le, és lefedi a nyitódarab (3a) körüli, ajakkal érintkező részt.

Tartalmaz továbbá a tisztaságot védő fedőrészen kiképzett, hüvelykujjal működtethető rugalmas domborulatot (6) a fedőrésszel a domborulat (6) lenyomásakor a felső fedél (50) fölé történő rugalmas felemeléséhez. A vékony lemeztesten (8a) a rögzítőelem (3) és a domborulat (6) közötti közbülső helyzetben levő vágási vonal által meghatározott nyitórész (13) van. A vékony lemeztestben (8a) továbbá benyomott hajtásvonal (10) van, amely a vágási vonal (24) végeitől kifelé egyenes vonalban helyezkedik el a vékony lemeztest (8a) külső széléig, és a tisztaságvédő

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elem (8) felemelésekor a nyitódarabnak (13a) a benyomott törésvonal (3c) mentén történő, nyitórész (13) általi beszakításához a vékony lemeztest (8a) meghajlítható ezen hajtás vonal (10) mentén. A nyitórész (13) merevségét erősítőeszköz javítja, amely lehetővé teszi, hogy a nyitórész (13) a nyitódarabot (3a) a benyomott törésvonal (3c) mentén hiba nélkül felnyissa.

*** ABRA Frame316 ***

*** ABRA Frame317 ***

Measures

5. Notification of publication (A2) (QJ)

Measure Date: 2002.01.28 *Announcement:* 2002.03.28

11. Notification of the performance of novelty search (A3) (RV)

Measure Date: 2002.10.09 *Announcement:* 2002.11.28